

NAMI Holiday Party 2015

by Renee Foote

On Tuesday, December 8, 2015, the annual NAMI Holiday Party was held at the Elks Lodge in Oxnard. The festive and fun event was hosted by NAMI Ventura County and sponsored by Ventura County Behavioral Health and Among Friends Adult Day Health Care Center.



The banquet room was filled with 518 people, including 361 mental health consumers and 46 volunteers, many of whom were dressed in cheerful holiday attire.

The Elks Lodge members served a delicious turkey dinner with mashed potatoes, gravy, cranberry sauce, mixed vegetables, salad, and rolls. The guests also feasted on various desserts such as cakes, pies, and cookies that were provided by volunteers and attendees.

After dinner, Elaine Crandall and other staff from Ventura County Behavioral Health led a sing along, which included Christmas carols such as "Jingle Bells," "Frosty the Snowman," and "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas."

Many guests enjoyed dancing to lively music by DJ Vince Franco, who also played holiday songs throughout the evening.

During the party, door prizes were raffled off, and all of the consumers received stockings filled with gifts like various sweet

(Continued on page 2)



It's Time!

NAMI Walks Ventura County

2016 is coming soon!

Saturday, April 30, 2016

Ventura Beach Promenade

To form a team or register
to walk visit

www.namiventura.org

To Sponsor call: 805.641.2426



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treats and warm socks. As they left for the night, many attendees thanked the volunteer staff for a fantastic evening, and the Wellness Center gave the volunteers a special thank you note.

Janice Gardner, the chairwoman of the Behavioral Health Advisory Board, said, "It is always a highlight of the Christmas season to see the clients enjoying themselves so much!"



Elaine Crandall and the VCBH Crew leading Christmas Carols.



Never give up on someone with a mental illness. When "I" is replaced by "We", illness becomes wellness.

~ Shannon L. Alder

Golf Tournament benefiting NAMI Ventura County



River Ridge Golf Club cordially invites you to a very special one-time event. NAMI Ventura County members Pat Mason and Kyle Kanny lost their son Zack as a result of his struggle with bipolar disorder. Zack, like so many people who battle this disorder, was unable to find the right mix of therapy to win his battle. In honor of Zack's life they are hosting a tournament to benefit NAMI Ventura County. Their goal is to raise money for NAMI Ventura County, encourage understanding of all mental illnesses, and to combat the stigma. Please bring a foursome or sign up as an individual for the Saturday morning scramble. A substantial part of the fee is tax deductible.

Saturday, March 5, 2016

9:00 am: Golf begins at 9:00 am, followed by a raffle, taco buffet and no-host bar

River Ridge Golf Club

2401 W. Vineyard Ave.

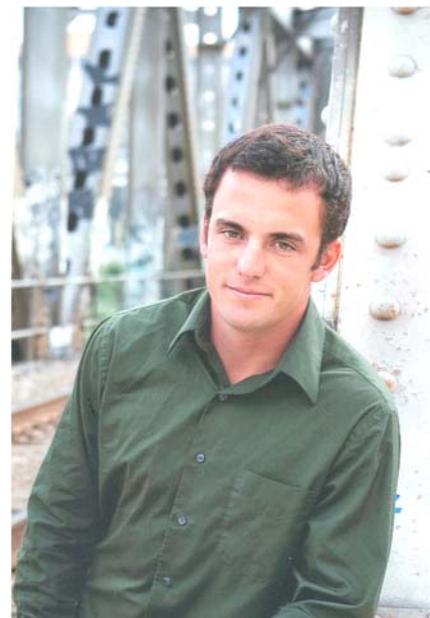
Oxnard, CA 93036

Cost: \$125 for people ages 30 and up

\$100 for ages 18-29

Register online at www.riverridge-golfclub.com

or call 805-983-4653



Zack Kanny

NAMI Family-to-Family National Alliance on Mental Illness

NAMI Family-to-Family is a free, 12-session educational program for family, significant others and friends of people living with mental illness. It is a designated evidenced-based program. Research shows that the program significantly improves the coping and problem-solving abilities of the people closest to an individual living with a mental health condition. NAMI Family-to-Family is taught by NAMI-trained family members who have been there, and includes presentations, discussion and interactive exercises. The class not only provides critical information and strategies for taking care of the person you love, but you'll also find out that you're not alone. Recovery is a journey, and there is hope.

NAMI Provider Education National Alliance on Mental Illness

NAMI Provider Education introduces mental health professionals to the unique perspectives of individuals living with mental illness and their families. You'll develop enhanced empathy for their daily challenges and recognize the importance of including them in all aspects of the treatment process. NAMI Provider Education is a free, 15 hour program of in-service training taught by a team consisting of an adult with mental illness, a family member and a mental health professional.

Highly recommended for all health care professionals including psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses, case managers, therapists, social workers, psychiatric technicians, drug and alcohol counselors, residential care givers, job counselors, receptionists, administrators, and all those who serve individuals with mental illness. *15 CEUs are available free.*

NAMI De Familia a Familia National Alliance on Mental Illness

El programa de NAMI De Familia a Familia es un curso de 12 semanas, gratuito, para los familiares y cuidadores de personas que sufren enfermedades mentales.

Esta serie de doce clases semanales ayuda a los familiares y cuidadores a comprender y ofrecer apoyo a sus seres queridos con trastornos mentales, cuidándose también a sí mismos. Los instructores, entrenados por NAMI, son voluntarios que saben por experiencia propia lo que es tener un familiar o amigo que lucha con uno de estos trastornos del cerebro.

NAMI Peer-to-Peer National Alliance on Mental Illness

NAMI Peer-to-Peer is a free, 10-session educational program for adults with mental illness who are looking to better understand their condition and journey toward recovery.

Taught by a trained team of people who've been there, the program includes presentations, discussion and interactive exercises. Everything is confidential, and NAMI never recommends a specific medical therapy or treatment approach.

NAMI Ventura County Education classes are offered at no cost. They are scheduled year round and in different parts of the county. You can check the current class schedule and register for classes that suit your schedule and location on our website.

www.namiventura.org

UPCOMING GENERAL MEETINGS



NAMI Ventura County holds monthly educational General Meetings dealing with a wide range of issues relating to mental illness. Meetings are free and open to all.

The General Meeting occurs on the 2nd Tuesday of every month except August and December.

Check the NAMI Website, www.namiventura.org, for information on upcoming meetings.

**Vineyard Community Church
1320 Flynn Road, Camarillo**

Become a sustaining member of NAMI Ventura County!



NAMI Ventura County Mental Health Heroes sustain NAMI Ventura County by donating on a regular monthly basis.

Your monthly donation includes membership in the local, state and national NAMI organizations, the quarterly newsletter and

NAMI National Advocate Magazine.

Go to www.namiventura.org/mentalhealthhero to sign up!

2015 MEMORIAL DONATIONS

In Memory of:

Zack Kanny

Alicia Alcantar
Manuel Alcantar
JJ & Jim Birkenshaw
Al and Robin Boudreau
Rebecca Brinkenhoff
Steven Carter
Jack Collings
Lorell Dawes
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Jaci Delahanty
Cheryl Donaldson
Binom Galloway
Steven Gantenbein
Spencer Garrett
A. Lee Hickman
The Hoffman Family
Clare Itner
Raymond and Beverly Johnson
Eric Johnson
Kyle Kanny
Otto and Wanda Kanny
John Kline
Jeanne Lapworth
Mary Lipari Harmon
Bob Mason
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Jean Mason
Bob Mason
Jean Mason
Nancy Mick
Kathy Mick
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John Nielsen
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Susan Olson
Matthew Orosco
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David Praver
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Phillip Rogers
Richard Romo
Susan Saims
Brooke Smith
Mr. and Mrs. Werner W. Spitz
Katherine Teague
Michele Thomas
John Turner
Norma Van Riper

(Zack Kanny cont.)

The Watase Family
Nancy Weile Garrett
Lynne Wysinger
Barbara Yost Oakes
Jackie Zurkammer



Toni Rini

Lillian Cross
William Ferrell
Jo Ann & Joseph Flowers
Jennifer Gomez
Barbara Griffin
Katrina Hollins
Larry Jackson
Fances Johnson
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Joan Ishida
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Pegge Wall



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John and Jean Bardgette
John Bardgette IV



Maria Angelica Undurraga

Jaime Undurraga
Carla Undurraga
Claudia Kolisack



William Abbott

Kathy Cominski



Stuart Saltman

Robert and Annette Glade



Volunteer Spotlight: Stories of Recovery

By Kimo Watanabe

Everyone's journey is unique and our scars may not always be seen by the naked eye. For my Health Education class project I chose NAMI Ventura County to educate about the stigma regarding mental illness. Joan Wiggins, the Program Coordinator, suggested that I interview some clients for NAMI's newsletter. With her help I was able to interview 3 women via phone for convenience since I don't drive. I prepared a set of questions to ask each interviewee about their own journeys--the onset of the illness, diagnosis, hospitalizations if any, and medications--and whether NAMI helped them in any way.

Katie:

My first interview was with Katie who had been diagnosed with Major Depression in the 90s, but nowadays it is called Bipolar Disorder. It all started when she was 13 years old suffering the manic highs and depressive lows, but she didn't get help until she was 22. As a result of missing a lot of classes, she did not graduate from high school but was able to obtain her GED later. Most fortunately for Katie, she was never hospitalized and her family was very nurturing throughout her trying times. She did self-medicate with alcohol when taking her medicines although compliancy was never an issue. That changed after getting a DUI in 2009; the unfortunate experience taught her the irony of mixing alcohol with her meds. It took almost all of her life to find the right medications and in 2012 Katie's psychiatrist finally found the right combination! Katie is joining Toastmasters to become a better public speaker and to help out with NAMI's "In Our Own Voice" program. She also earned her Realtor license recently.

Regina:

The second interview I conducted was with Regina, a fellow volunteer for NAMI. She was symptomatic from the age of 12 up until 40 with Bipolar Disorder. Regina had been hospitalized over 12 times due to multiple suicide attempts and severe post-partum depression after having 3 daughters. At times she took as many as 6 medications but now she is on just 2. She spoke about the difficulties of taking these medicines because of the side effects like weight gain, nausea, and reduced libido which took a toll on her marriage. Through hard work and perseverance she is happy to share that she's now been married 38 years. Regina is a firm believer in God and keeps a very active schedule. She works at the Client Network of Ventura County, volunteers at Turning Point Foundation, and is on the committee for the National Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

Carol:

The last interview was with Carol who struggled with severe recurrent major depression, acute anxiety with agoraphobia and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). When she was little she was sexually abused by her mother. By the time she was 13 she had planned her own funeral with

music, liturgy and wrote out a will. Carol had a psychotic break when she was 26, which resulted in emptying her bank account and becoming homeless in Las Vegas for 2 ½ years. It was a caring police officer and the Salvation Army who saved her from her darkest despair. She shared that she was hospitalized over 22 times and was suicidal for 32 years of her life. Carol survived the old psychiatry practice in which she was given medications for illnesses that she didn't have. At one time she was given as many as

I feel blessed to share my experience to give hope to other people who are going through the unspeakable pain. I still have intermittent paranoia and depression, but I try to practice "mindfulness" in order to calm myself.

15 medications, but is now on 9. It took 35 years to find the right meds because she was diagnosed incorrectly in the beginning. She rekindled her relationship with her mom for the last 5 years of her

life although her father remains angry with Carol for being gay. She said she has a special affinity for psychiatrists and psychologists because of the care they put into their practice. Carol now speaks for NAMI through the "In Our Own Voice" program which is her way of giving back to the community.

Kimo:

Now to my own story: I too have been suffering from schizoaffective disorder for more than 15 years. I was hospitalized twice in 2002 and stopped self-medicating with alcohol in 2005 under the threat of my mother withdrawing her support. On occasion I had to change a psychiatrist or psychologist when my needs weren't met. I also tried many different medications with different side effects and had to start the process all over. It is the same story all too painful and familiar to forget. Presently I try not to take things for granted: I learned to eat healthy, exercise, and meditate when I get anxious. I find that advocating for NAMI helps in my recovery more than I realize. I feel blessed to share my experience to give hope to other people who are going through the unspeakable pain. I still have intermittent paranoia and depression, but I try to practice "mindfulness" in order to calm myself to attend classes at Moorpark College.

From the interviews with Katie, Regina and Carol, I learned the importance of correct diagnosis, adherence to medications, and social connections to fight the stigma. Unlike the early years of ineffective treatments for mental illness, we can now recover from an improved psychiatry and psychology model. There are still a lot of things that needs improvement, but I believe things will get better with advanced medicine and acceptance of mental illness by the public. In conclusion, I cannot emphasize enough the importance of having an advocate (supporting family member, caregiver or friends). Equally critical is the self determination of quiet resolve to stick with the program. I too have to remind myself to be patient with the progress, stick with the program, and appreciate the baby steps of road to success.



**NAMI Ventura County Help Line
(805) 500-NAMI**

Volunteers and staff can provide information on a variety of resources, including mental health services, housing, legal assistance, support groups, classes for families and clients, etc. Open Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

If you have a mental health emergency, call the VCBH Crisis Team at (866) 998-2243. Or call police at 911 and ask for a CIT trained officer.

Acute Care Psychiatric Hospitals

Hillmont Psychiatric Center

All county residents
(805) 652-6729
200 N. Hillmont Ave., Ventura, CA 93003

Aurora Vista del Mar

Medicare and private insurance only
(805) 653-6434
801 Seneca St., Ventura, CA 93001

Ventura County Behavioral Health

If you or a loved one are experiencing a mental health crisis, call the VCBH Crisis Team 24/7 at (866) 998-2243.

Ventura County Behavioral Health (VCBH) provides outpatient mental health services for children, transitional age youth (ages 18 to 25), adults and older adults.

For all appointments, call the STAR program at (866) 998-2243
(Screening, Triage, Assessment, Referral)

If You Live In:	Your Outpatient Clinic:
Ojai or Ventura (excluding 93004)	4258 Telegraph Rd Ventura, CA 93003
Fillmore, Piru or Ventura 93004	333 W. Harvard Blvd. Santa Paula, CA 93060
Oxnard, El Rio or Port Hueneme	1911 Williams Dr., Ste 110 Oxnard, CA 93036
Camarillo, Thousand Oaks, and Ventura County areas of Agoura, Westlake, Bell Canyon	125 W. Thousand Oaks Thousand Oaks, CA 91360
Simi Valley or Moorpark	1227 E. Los Angeles Ave Simi Valley, CA 93065

NAMI FAMILY SUPPORT GROUPS

*Please note – These NAMI groups are for family members.
See below for consumer/client support groups.*

Support group attendees and other family members are urged to come back so as to help others! Drop in – no need to call ahead!

To check the date of the next meeting, go to www.namiventura.org and select "Calendar". Or call NAMI at (805) 500-NAMI.

Camarillo – Meets at 5:30 p.m., the second Tuesday at Vineyard Community Church, 1320 Flynn Rd, Camarillo.

Thousand Oaks – Meets at 7:00 p.m. the first and third Monday of each month at Kaiser Permanente, 145 Hodencamp Rd., Thousand Oaks.

Ventura – Meets at 6:30 pm, the first and third Tuesday at Bible Fellowship Church, 6950 Ralston St (use entrance from Johnson Drive), Building 300, Room 302, Ventura.

Simi Valley – Meets at 6:15 pm, the first and third Thursday at Cincas, 1424 Madera Rd., Simi Valley, CA 93065.

GRUPO DE APOYO

For Spanish-speaking family members

Oxnard – Meets at 6:30 pm, the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays at The Wellness Center, 2697 Saviers Rd. Oxnard, CA 93030. For information in Spanish, call: Dolores (805)443-0760 or Adriana (805)612-0495

PEER SUPPORT GROUPS

NAMI CONNECTION

Please note – These NAMI groups are for clients/consumers only.

A recovery support group program, for adults living with mental illness, which is expanding in communities all across the country. These groups provide a place that offers respect, understanding, encouragement, and hope. NAMI Connection groups offer a casual and relaxed approach to sharing the challenges and successes of coping with mental illness. Each group meets weekly for 90 minutes, is offered free of charge and follows a flexible structure without an educational format.

First and third Wednesday of each month, 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm
NAMI Ventura County Office, 5251 Verdugo Way, Suite K., Camarillo

PEER SUPPORT GROUPS

DEPRESSION AND BIPOLAR SUPPORT ALLIANCE

Ventura: DBSA Support Group meets every Tuesday, 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm, Bible Fellowship Church, 6950 Ralston Street (& Johnson Drive), Building 300, Room 301, Ventura. Park in the lot off Johnson Drive. No registration required. For more info, call (805) 253-3289.

Ventura: DBSA Support Group meets 1st and 3rd Saturdays, 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm at The Wellness Center, Turning Point Foundation, 1065 E. Main Street, Ventura. For more information, call (805) 671-5038

Oak Park: DBSA Conejo Valley Depression Support Group meets Mondays at 7:00 p.m. at Church of the Epiphany, Mitchel Hall, Room 6, 5450 Churchwood Dr. (Kanan & Churchwood) Oak Park. No registration required. For more information, call Sandra at 818-851-9173.

David's Desk

Well, 2015 has come and gone and we are beginning a new year with hope and great anticipation. We hope that 2016 will see an increase in awareness about issues of concern surrounding the provision of mental health services in Ventura County. Perhaps most notably, we hope that Laura's Law will be put into place in a timely and comprehensive manner but we are also focused on the ongoing need for quality housing for consumers in our various communities in Ventura County. That housing, coupled with supportive services is a proven formula for promoting successful recovery for people. Our hope is that there will be continued efforts to provide more housing resources for consumers in our county.

We are also looking forward to the opening of the new Mental Health Rehabilitation Center (MHRC) in Camarillo in the later part of 2016 with great anticipation. We know this facility will be of great help to the persons who will be placed there and their family members will benefit as well. The fact that it will be in Ventura County will facilitate a greater frequency of family visits which contributes significantly to the recovery process.

We are also anticipating a great NAMI Walk for 2016! The walk this year will be held on Saturday April 30, 2016 at the usual location on the Ventura Beach Promenade. The Walk is our biggest annual event and the proceeds from the Walk are what (in large part) funds the programs that NAMI provides free of charge to the members of our Ventura County Community. Your participation and involvement is welcomed and encouraged! Aside from the fundraising aspect of the Walk, we believe that it is an effective tool to help "Stamp Out Stigma" surrounding the issue of mental illness. Every year we meet new people at the site of the Walk who share about a friend or loved one who has mental health challenges. The Walk is a great opportunity to engage with people who may not know about NAMI Ventura County and the work that we do on behalf of consumers and family members. It is also a way to advocate for services and to help educate people. We look forward to seeing you at The NAMI Walk!

David Deutsch
Executive Director
NAMI Ventura County

NAMI Ventura County Contact Information

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1613, Camarillo, CA 93011

Office: 5251 Verdugo Way, Suite K, Camarillo, CA 93012

Helpline: (805) 500-NAMI

Phone: (805) 641-2426

Fax: (805) 275-2188

e-mail: info@namiventura.org

Website: www.namiventura.org

Staff

Executive Director: David Deutsch
Program Coordinator: Chris Novak
Program Coordinator: Joan Wiggins
Program Coordinator: Diane Bustillos

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Please hear this: There are not 'schizophrenics.'
There are people with schizophrenia. ~ Elyn Saks

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NAMI VENTURA COUNTY
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Become a member, renew your membership or donate by filling out the form completely, and mail with card info or check payable to: NAMI Ventura County, P.O. Box 1613, Camarillo, CA 93011-1613, or at our website, www.namiventura.org

Check One: New Member Renewal

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Membership level, *one year* (check one):

Sustaining Gold (\$100) Silver (\$50)* General (\$35) Open Door (\$3)*

Sustaining Member: _____ per month (Mental Health Hero)

Membership Dues: _____

Donation: _____

Total : _____

Go online now to www.namiventura.org
To Become a Member or Donate!

Please bill my credit card: Visa MasterCard American Express Discover

Card Number: _____ Exp. Date _____ CVV Code _____

Name on Card: _____

* An open door membership is available to anyone who is unable to pay full membership.

Dues and donations to NAMI Ventura County are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.